COMMUNION MEDITATION
December 2, 1973

Jeremiah 33:14-16
1 Thess 5:1-6

on Table

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In a new book "The Moods of Christmas", Howard Therman reflects on the fact that down through history single events - or words - became critical turning points without the people directly involved realizing it. Who at the time , for instance, the night of December 16, 1773 - realized the significance of dumping some tea into Boston Harbor?

Therman writes: "There must alwasy be provision for the ample moment when an event takes on the character of the Sacramental, however such an event may be named in the calendar. The true significance of the event is to be found in the quality of celebration which it inspires in the heart".

Or take that wild man of God by the name of Jeremiah: who in the world could have known the significance of these words which he wrote? "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to Israel. I will cause a righteous branch to shoot forth..."

No one, to be precise. For what people heard - and - probably what he meant was that the nation would be restored to former glory. Another King David would sit on the throne and the Kings of Babylon and Egypt would know once again that you can't get away with pushing God's people around indefinitely.

When the promise was fulfilled no one, of much consequence, seemed to notice - with the exception of a few shepherds and several astronomers. The moment came and went.

Forty five years later, a man who knew the significance of the birth in Bethlehem wrote a letter to a group of people who were in the process of learning: and this is what he said - "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night...so let us not sleep - let us keep awake..."

Unfortunately, the readers of those words across the years have been more ready to believe that God wants to end the world than to love it. And so "the day of the Lord" has come to be regarded as an ominous cataclysm. But, in fact, Paul was advising his friends that any particular moment can become the moment of grace - and that the man who goes through life with his eyes closed, asleep as it were, is likely to miss it.

So, today, we observe Advent - the season of anticipation - of looking forward - a season that reminds us to expect the unexpected because that is always how it happens. So today, we begin something that began when the first Santa Claus appeared on the counter sometime in October. We'll do it all again: we'll do the things we did last year

and the year before: we'll get overworked and stretched out and anxious and maybe we'll even look forward to the blessed relief of December 26 and in the meantime walk through these beautiful weeks with our eyes closed tightly.

How God in his heaven must regret that! Because, I believe, he graces this season with his peace and love and healing in a special way. His love is looking for ways, in this season, to be let loose. His love tugs at our hearts and somehow intensifies our love. He's ready toget into the act and work an incarnation - an enfleshing of his love in us - if we're not too busy. His joy twinkles in the eyes of little children. His pleasure at his creation is reflected in grandmothers and grandfathers who indulge the little ones a bit even though they wouldn't or couldn't with their own. His will that men live in peace reaches into our lives and grabs us where we feel the tradegy of war - at Christmas.

So today, the first Sunday in the season of expecting that which is always expected. And we begin it, by design at the place he promised to meet us - his table - eating together those simple elements he chose to be remembered by.

"How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in. AMEN

Invitation - ~~Worshipbook~~ Service Sheet